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ABSTRACT

A review of the literature of Performance Based Teacher Education (PBTE) programs indicates a void in the area of human skills teacher training. In response to this lack of relevant research, this paper presents a view of how group counseling procedures can successfully be integrated into PBTE as an approach to humanistic skills training. With regard to student needs, institutional directions, and program flexibility, the goals and objectives of PBTE are discussed, with emphasis given to both the pros and cons of such a program. The need for intensive research in the area of group counseling as a strategy for human skills training in PBTE is also emphasized. (Author)

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GROUP COUNSELING IN PERFORMANCE BASED TEACHER EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

After having served on the State of Texas Committee for Performance Based Teacher Education (PBTE) in Adult Basic Education, and after considerable reading within the field, it has become obvious to the writer that once again the student has become institutionalized, rationalized, programed and reduced to a mere statistic. Every argument for Performance Based Teacher Education is logical, straight forth, empirical and programed. In short, like the mechanized society from which it has come, PBTE leaves very little room for the student as a person, but demands to observe the student as an object such as a monkey that must be trained to perform tasks on cue.

However bitter the argument between traditional education programs and PBTE becomes, the student must be benefited by change. Change for change's sake is meaningless. The teacher today cannot survive with competency in only behaviorally developed technical teaching skills. Or: He must have a full sense of self awareness, flexibility and rapport with his students.

It is the design of this paper to compromise two divergent concepts of teachers that are being produced. Group counseling can be used as a bridge between the student as a social security number and the student with no teaching skills. In short, group counseling is the key that unlocks the students (within the PBTE structure) and shows him the human aspects of himself and others. Only with self identify, self direction, and humanistic skills will the student be able to become the well rounded and effective teacher that is needed today.

For the purpose of this paper, PBTE will be used to connote a program designed specifically and explicitly to provide the prospective teacher with learning experiences and instruction that will prepare him technically to assume a specific teaching role. The student within such a system must provide satisfactory evidence, not only that he possesses specified requisite knowledge, but also that he can carry out in practice specified teaching tasks and functions (Massanari, 1971).

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By way of further definition, group counseling will be used to describe a dynamic interpersonal process focusing on conscious thought and behavior and involving the theory functions described by Gazda (1971) of permissiveness, orientation to reality, catharsis, and mutual trust, caring, understanding, acceptance and support. These functions -- especially mutual respect, warmth and understanding -- are created and nurtured in a small group through the group counseling process of sharing. The students are basically "normal" persons able to be fully functioning and self directed. The group counseling process utilizes the group interaction to increase understanding and acceptance of values and goals and to learn or unlearn certain attitudes and/or behaviors.

NEED FOR CHANGE

There is obviously something wrong with the way higher educators are producing their student counterparts. Within the present "hit or miss" system of educating teachers, no one can be sure if the products have learned their jobs well and if they possess the compentencies needed to perform well. Society is demanding specialization, professionalism, and guarantees that the teachers who are hired are, in fact, teachers with something to offer students and the skill to impart knowledge and facilitate learning. The system that is presently being used is breaking down and cannot provide these assurances.

Enter PBTE! By use of extraordinary means of sorting, selecting, previewing and insolating, the higher educator is able to describe those tasks that represent learning and professionalism. The higher educator is not only able to describe those skills, but to demand that his students obtain the competencies needed to affect change or learning. By setting behavioral objectives and outlining steps that will force learning skills, the higher educator has been able to demand performance and uniformity of learning.

The professor and student negotiate goal setting and select supporting learning experiences. According to Massanari (1971), the student has:

1. Sharper focus on objective: They are determined in advance, made explicit, and used as a basis for evaluating performance.
2. Individualization of the responsibility for learning: Responsibility is shifted from the teacher to the individual learner.

3. More attention to individual differences: Learners may select different learning experiences and choose alternative routes to achieve the stated objectives.
4. Learning experiences that are related more directly to the objectives: Learning materials, resources, and experiences are directly related to specific objective, and consequently, the learning focuses on the objectives more than on the resources used to attain them; learning becomes a mean to an end.
5. Individual assessment and feedback: As early as possible and on a continuing basis, the prospective teacher is provided feedback concerning his performance as he works toward attaining each objective.
6. More effective integration of theory and practice: Practice experiences, either in stimulated or real-life situations, tend to be related closely to the theory being studied; they are incorporated in the program at the most opportune time.
7. Evaluation focuses not only on what the learner knows, but also on how he performs in actual teaching situations. Objectives are typically stated as performance criteria, providing a more effective basis for evaluation.
8. Change in the role of the teacher: The teacher is viewed more as an enabler of learning than a disperser of knowledge.

PBTE seems to fulfill adequately the role of insuring professional competencies of the student. The student becomes an individualized learner, an expert in research techniques, a self-motivated goal former, and his role is considered professional rather than pre-service or apprentice in nature. Why then take issue with PBTE? The student can demonstrate competency in such specialized teaching areas as lesson and unit planning, transfer of learning, reading study techniques, phonic analysis skills, reading comprehension, discipline, oral and written communication, etal. It is not enough to be a mechanized, computerized, performance orientated, goal achieving teacher. The teacher must also be a person, a helper, a mother, a father, and a counselor to his students.

REQUIRED GROUP COUNSELING AS A HUMANISTIC BRIDGE TO PBTE

Try as he may, the higher educator cannot isolate, program, or assess humanistic skills such as empathy, warmth and genuineness as defied by Rogers (1969). Humanistic skills are too abstract, to individualized, and often too personal to put down in a behavioral objective. The student needs also to have expertise in human relations. Human relation is important to him and to his students. Nowhere can programmed learning of this sort be found. How then does the learner obtain these humanistic skills that he needs so badly?

An eclectic look for solutions to these problems will lead to a group counseling experience for every prospective teacher.

> In reality therapy, the basic needs are described as the need for love and the need for self-worth. A person must learn to give and receive love; he must find someone in the world to love and someone in the world who loves him, many people, if possible, but at the minimum one person he loves and one person who loves him..... then love and self-worth may be considered the two pathways that mankind has discovered lead to a successful identity (Glasser, 1969)

The prospective teacher must achieve identity within a system that is designed to produce cold, hard professional skills. The student cannot succeed until he has successfully experienced success. Or, as Rogers stated it, self-initiated learning which involves the whole person of the learner-feelings as well as intellect is the most lasting and pervasive. This is not learning which takes place "only from the neck up". It is a "gut level" type of learning which is profound and pervasive (Rogers, 1969).

Learning how to feel at the gut level and how to deal effectively with feelings occurs in systematic training of human relations or group experience. The prospective teacher is given the opportunity or freedom to explore himself, his ideas, his values, and those of his peers without fear of failure.

To be more specific, group counseling can benefit PBTE in terms of specific overt positive behavioral change in the following ways:

1. By helping to fulfill the abstract developmental tasks necessary for the students age group. According to Gazda (1971), these tasks are:

(a) Achieving an appropriate dependence-independence pattern; (b) Achieving an appropraite giving-receiving pattern of effection; (c) Relating to changing social groups; (d) Developing a conscience; (e) Learning one's psycho-socio-biological sex role; (f) Accepting and adjusting to a changing body; (g) Managing a changing body and learning new psycho-motor patterns; (h) Learning to understand and control the physical world; (i) Developing an appropriate symbol system and conceptual abilities; (j) Relating one's self to the cosmos.

2. By giving the student personal identity.
3. By assisting the student over the "rough spots" in his life.
4. By enabling deep friendship formation and more intimate knowledge of professors and peers.
5. By obtaining humanistic skills necessary for student-teacher rapport formation.

Two problems faced by combining group counseling and PBTE are implementation and assessment of such a program. Assessment could include:

1. Interviews with students within the program to determine the benefits to them of group counseling/guidance courses. Some questions that could be answered by those interviews could include: (a) Has it helped in personal life? (b) Has it eased the college adjustment? (c) Do you possess humanistic skills that you can use in the classroom? (d) Is there a need for humanistic skills within the classromm? (c) Do you have a better relationship with teachers and peers because of your humanistic training?
2. Interviews with college teachers
3. Follow-up interviews with "on the job" supervisors
4. Interviews with "on the job" professional colleagues
5. Cross section interviews with the students of the teacher trained in humanistic skills
6. A comparison study of the assessment criteria on a control group of teachers not trained in humanistic skills by way of group counseling.

The next problem faced by any university is implementation of such counseling program to coincide with the implementation of the PBTE program.

Research indicates the greatest period of stress and personality change occurs within the late freshman to early junior years in college. It should, therefore, be implemented to follow closely with the "rough spots" in the student's college life. In this paper, the writer proposes that:

1. Group counseling be required for one semester in the freshman year in the form of a three hour course led by a trained counselor and attended by major field instructors.
2. Two semesters of group counseling should be required during the sophomore year in college. The first semester course should be led by a trained counselor and a para-professional (junior or senior already possessing humanistic skills). Faculty members should also attend selected sessions. The second semester of group counseling would involve a changing of group personnel and a more active demonstration of learned humanistic skills. The second semester would also be led by a trained counselor and a para-professional and would be attended by faculty members on a regular basis.
3. No grade, achievement rating, or other signs of academic evaluation should impede the group process. Only a credit or non-credit system should be used.
4. The entire group process should be discussed in a paper required during the senior year of college in order to obtain objective data on the relevance of the group experience.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since PBTE is a fledgling field of endeavor and active research is currently underway to improve, modify, and solidify skills needed in teaching, before PBTE becomes too set -- such as the system currently being used, research must be done for the benefit of the student in humanistic skills training. Group counseling has been effective as a method for training humanistic skills and should be researched to find its proper place in PBTE. Solid research evidence must be present before long time administrators, faculty and the public -- reluctant to change anything -- will consider the proactive position of group counseling. Only with active research will leaders in the field of group counseling be able to convince others, in the field of education, of the merits of the product on which they rely and in which they believe.

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